



LTT REPORT RELEASED: VOLUNTARY EXIT OPTIONS ENDORSED BY CABINET

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STATEMENT BY MINISTER BARBARA CREECY ON THE RELEASE OF
REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM ON VOLUNTARY EXIT
OPTIONS AND PATHWAYS FROM CAPTIVE LION INDUSTRY

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3 APRIL 2024

I have today, released the report of the Ministerial Task Team on
Voluntary Exit Options and Pathways from the Captive Lion Industry.

Cabinet has approved the release of the report and its recommendations for implementation.

The Ministerial Task Team (MTT) was appointed in December 2022, following a recommendation by the High-Level Panel on matters relating to the management, breeding, hunting, trade and handling of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros. The panel recommended the closure of the captive breeding sector, including the keeping of lions in captivity, or the use of captive lions or their derivatives commercially.

The task team was established to identify and recommend win-win voluntary exit options and pathways from captive lion industry. The team was chaired by Mr Kamalasen Chetty. The other members of the team were Mr Obied Katumba, Dr Louise de Waal, Ms Carla van der Vyfer, Dr Christine Steyrer, Adv Justice Mnisi and Dr Kelly Marnewick.

The key focus areas of the task team were:

- To undertake a process of engagement with key stakeholders in the captive lion industry, relevant issuing authorities and including any vulnerable workers.
- Plan and oversee an audit of existing captive and captive-bred facilities to confirm the number of lions, their age and sex, stockpiles of lion parts and derivatives, the practices and uses within that facility, number, level of employment and skills of workers and potential other land use options within the biodiversity economy.
- To develop and oversee the initial implementation of a voluntary exit strategy and pathways from the captive lion industry for stakeholders who wish to pursue this option. This exit strategy should consider all possible options, and prevailing issued within the captive lion industry.
- To identify, mobilise and endorse potential funding mechanisms, sources and procedures to support the voluntary exit strategy and pathways.
- To provide advice to the Minister or Department on any other matters related to the captive lion industry on request by either.

South Africa is a country, with diverse cultures, remarkable geological wealth, and exceptional biodiversity, much of which is unique, and with high levels of endemism. With this rich endowment comes the responsibility and challenge of ensuring our species and ecosystems are

conserved and used sustainably for the benefit of all South Africans and future generations.

Section 24 of the Constitution requires reasonable legislative and other measures be put in place to ensure that the environment is protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, including through promoting conservation and securing ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources.

This report should be understood in the broader policy context of the White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable use and the Policy Position on the conservation and sustainable use of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros that was approved last week by Cabinet for implementation.

In summary, the Key Recommendations of the Task Team were that Government approve:

- a) Phase 1: Engage voluntary exit candidates to finalise the pathways and exit terms.
- b) Phase 2: Acquisition and incineration of lion bone stockpiles contingent upon sterilisation of lions and compliance with the voluntary exit principles.
- c) Issue a short-term directive to ensure consistent application of animal well-being is assured through issuing of permits and conducting oversights.
- d) Prohibit captive lion breeding in the medium term to safeguard benefits of voluntary exit.

I am pleased to announce that Cabinet has endorsed the recommendations of the Task Team.

I wish to thank the Ministerial Task Team, for the sterling work that it has done in producing a comprehensive and credible report with a set of findings and recommendations which address the difficult issues in the captive lion industry as contained in the Terms of Reference.

I also wish to thank the captive lion industry and the other key stakeholders who have assisted the Task Team in its work to identify voluntary exit options and pathways from captive lion industry.

I thank you.

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ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE
ENVIRONMENT

Editor's note:

Last week, cabinet approved the revised Policy Position on the conservation and sustainable use of elephant, lion, leopard and rhinoceros for implementation.

The strategic impact of this policy position is that it will provide policy certainty for specific elements of the conservation and sustainable use of these five species, and, furthermore, provide a basis to review legislation where applicable and appropriate.

Consistent with the policy context of the White Paper, this Policy Position focuses primarily on correcting unsustainable practices, promoting conservation, sustainable use, and the well-being of the five species, and providing policy direction for international commercial trade in the five species.

The Policy Position, therefore, proposes three conservation and sustainable use policy objectives to enhance species management:

- To end the captive keeping of lions for commercial purposes and close captive lion facilities, put a halt to the intensive breeding of lion in controlled environments, and end the commercial exploitation of captive and captive-bred lions;
- To phase out intensive management and captive breeding of rhinoceros for commercial purposes, and enhance wild populations; and
- To ensure that the use of leopard is sustainable, incentivizes and enhances their conservation in the wild.

The Policy Position also proposes three international commercial trade-related policy objectives:

- To promote live export of the five species only to range states or any other appropriate and acceptable destinations with suitable habitats on the African continent;
- South Africa will work with range states and potential destination countries to support a proposal for international commercial trade

- in rhinoceros horn from protected wild rhinoceros, for conservation purposes, when conditions become favourable; and
- Consider international commercial elephant ivory trade only when conditions become favourable.

Each objective in this Policy Position has associated activities for implementation. By adopting practices that are responsible, legal, sustainable, and promote animal well-being, the implementation of the six Policy Objectives will transform practices within the wildlife industry that are not conducive to animal well-being and promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in general, and these species in particular.

This will enhance South Africa's position as a megadiverse country and leader in the conservation and sustainable use of these iconic species.

Ministerial Task Team Presentation – 03 April 2024

Click here to download the [Ministerial Task Team Presentation](#) at the Press briefing on 03 April 2024

Click here to download the [Ministerial Task Team Report](#)